

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

A Philadelphia widow has inherited \$50,000,000, London papers please don't copy.

Many an angler who tries to catch fish succeeds only in catching rheumatism.

Experts predict that the rubber supply will be exhausted in five years. Save your bands!

Tibet gets its tea from China compressed into bricks. Do the Tibbites eat the stuff as breakfast food?

A fashion writer announces that "some very pretty things will be seen in the new stylish gowns." This is generally the case.

It is probably not true that Ion Perdicaris and Mrs. Maybrick are to be starred in a curtain-raiser entitled "Just Released."

A diamond worth \$200 that was lost at Winsted, Conn., fourteen years ago has been dug up by chickens. This is a feat to crow over.

A new \$20 bill doesn't look so big to a man when he is flush as a 50-cent piece when he is broke and comes across it unexpectedly in the pocket of his other vest.

The worst feature of the Port Arthur business is the fact that the "survivor" of that historic siege will shortly be coming around kitchen doors with his dolorous tale.

The Sultan's life was saved the other day by a shirt of mail. This indicates that the Sultan, in spite of the many things that come up to disturb him, generally manages to keep his shirt on.

Some men chew and smoke not because they like tobacco or desire to contract the habit, but because they want one of the pieces of furniture or solid gold jewelry given away for twenty-five tags.

The small New Hampshire boy who gave his friend a cent (his own penny) for saving his life is a glittering example for your Uncle Russell. But he'd probably deliver a lecture against thriftlessness on the text.

The farmers who are welcoming the automobiles with shoguns do not realize that an enlightened self-interest would give every encouragement to the automobile, since its rise and progress has already done much for good roads in America, and it is likely to do more.

Galveston's great sea-wall, begun in 1902, to protect the city from inundation by the Gulf of Mexico, was completed in July. It is three and one-fourth miles long, and its top is seventeen feet above mean tide. The level of the city on the Gulf side will be raised to the top of the wall by dumping in sand dredged from the mouth of the harbor.

Hereafter the work of the medical missionaries in China ought to be easier. The dowager empress has contributed six thousand dollars toward the cost of the building of a medical college to be erected in Peking, to be conducted by the London Mission, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Presbyterian Mission. Students of all creeds, native and Christian, will be admitted and trained for five years. Then they will receive a diploma and go out to heal the sick, with the official approval of the empress.

A young man who lives in Minneapolis has beaten the girls of the Northwest at their own game. He has taken the first prize at the fair for "fancy work," a term which includes all kinds of tidies and dollies and centerpieces and pin cushions and embroidery and every other kind of dainty work with the needle. There is an element of retribution in this. The girls have been beating the boys in school and in the university and taking their jobs away from them in all kinds of business. It serves them right to have a boy get even with them on their own ground and beat them all hollow at their own game.

The announcement that the vast property accumulated by the late William Weightman, of Philadelphia, had passed by will to his daughter, Mrs. Walker, and that thereby she became the richest woman in America, was followed on the next day by the gathering of such a crowd about her residence as to destroy her private life. She was unable to go out of doors and unable to keep the push away from her neighborhood. At every attempt that she made to take a carriage there was such a rush toward her that she had to give up the plan. Riches are supposed to have their chief value in bringing to their possessor the means of securing whatever he wants. One of the things we all most want is the privilege of moving about undisturbed and making what use we wish of our time. This overwhelmingly rich Philadelphia woman starts off a prisoner in her own home.

In spite of cynical data to the contrary, Diogenes would have no occasion to keep his lantern alight very long these days. Honest men are by no means so rare as they are reputed to be. The Chicago street sweeper who found a diamond bracelet worth \$2,000 and returned it to its owner would probably have answered Diogenes' requirements. So would the New York street car conductor who found \$1,500 in bank notes on the floor of his car and promptly hunted up the owner thereof. These are incidents which have come to light because of their quasi-public character. We may be sure that there are hundreds of others which are not heard of. Indeed, most people know of such cases. The truth is—and it is an encouraging one—that people are far more honest than they

are credited with being. If it were not so human activity would come to a practical standstill, since the ultimate basis of all business transactions is honesty. Without it no precaution which ingenuity could devise would be sufficient to protect against general dishonesty. The element of honesty enters into all transactions. Man trusts his fellow man to a greater or less extent every time he buys or sells anything—relied on his good faith for the accuracy of his representations and places confidence in verbal pledges more than in written bonds. Cynicism alone regards humanity as naturally dishonest. Observation and experience show the reverse to be the case. Men are naturally honest. It is usually stress of adversity or misfortune which makes them otherwise.

Everybody, male and female, old and young, ought to learn to swim. Some people try all their lives to learn to swim and do not succeed. They do not appear to be timid or afraid of the water, and they follow faithfully all the instructions given them, and yet they make no progress whatever. The ability to swim will not always save a man's life. He may fall into the water from such a height and plunge so deep as never to regain control of himself. The water may be so cold as to paralyze him and stop his breath. He may be so far from help that his strength will give out. He may have on so many clothes that they may sink him. A man may even drown because he is a good swimmer. His very expertness may make him reckless, and if he is of a heroic turn he is apt to lose his life trying to save others. All this does not alter the fact that people should be able to swim. The ability to swim six feet or keep afloat for five minutes may save their lives and enable them to save others. Then the ability to swim delivers them from an inordinate dread of the water. In any ordinary situation where the shore is not distant and the water is not cold they could not regard a plunge in any other light than as a laughable adventure when otherwise it is a matter of life and death. The pleasure of life are greatly enhanced for the man who even knows that he could swim a few yards. Learning to swim is one of the most inscrutable things in human nature. What does it consist in? Everyone has seen beginners make all the strokes correctly and still sink to the bottom. By and by these same beginners will make the same strokes and float on top of the water. What is the difference in their movements? It appears to be nothing but confidence in one's self, and, strange to say, when this confidence is once acquired it is never lost, though a person may not go into the water for ten years. In some places people learn to swim by using a reducible float of some kind. This may be a plank made in sections that are screwed together. The pupil learns to swim on the whole plank and then gradually reduces it in size until he is able to dispense with it altogether. This is a simple and cheap expedient and leaves no excuse for anyone who cannot swim.

CHILE IS RICH IN MINERALS. Coal, Nitrate and Copper Abound in South American Country. The famous coal mines of Lota and Coronel have an annual yield of 1,000,000 tons and employ 9,000 laborers. This not only supplies Chile's needs, but also coals nearly all the European steamers touching the border. The coal is what is termed "soft," but it is of good quality. The country imports some hard coal. The most important mineral industry is, of course, the nitrate of soda. Chile at present has over 100 nitrate works. The crude material (called caliche), is found under a conglomerate, in beds varying from a few inches to twelve feet in thickness. The process of extraction is one of leaching and refining by crystallization. About 1,400,000 metric tons of 2,204 pounds each are annually produced, estimated to be worth \$54,000,000 in Europe. About four-fifths of all the nitrate exported goes to England and the continent, Great Britain alone taking one-third and Germany a little less. A large amount of British capital is invested in the nitrate fields, sixteen of the largest companies alone representing a capitalization of more than \$40,000,000. The Chilean government exacts a duty of \$11.52 a ton on all nitrate exported. In metal mining copper comes first, both as to present output and further opportunity. The country needs modern metallurgical processes and knowledge of successful methods of handling low-grade ores. The present production is 30,000 tons of copper annually. Manganese is also an important industry. Silver, once very highly profitable, has declined; 74,000 kilograms of silver were exported in 1900. Promising gold deposits exist, especially in southern Chile; \$30,000,000 in gold, gold ores and matte, have been exported in the past ten years.—Engineering Magazine.

A Street Cleaning Machine. A street cleaning machine has recently been tested in New York which contains many features of interest. It is drawn by a couple of horses, and performs all the functions of a street cleaning gang, except scraping the roadway with the rubber squeegee which are used on asphalt. A revolving broom sweeps the dirt to a conveyor, lifting it into a covered bin. Just in front of the broom there is a horizontal pipe through which jets of water are sprayed on the street so as to prevent dust. The dirt collected in the bin is distributed uniformly through it by means of a squeegee, and when the bin is filled it can be discharged into a cart, or on the ground in a heap, by letting down a door and scraping the contents out by a simple form of conveyor. The water is carried in a tank below the bin. Not many years after a boy has made life miserable for his school teachers by his viciousness, he begins to make the mothers in town miserable by the attention he pays to their daughters. It is dangerous to place confidence in a man who brags over having five

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